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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the empirical evidence available to date concerning the evolving role of the principal. First, it briefly describes the effects of fundamental reform measures on the work environment of school principals, with a focus on work overload and role ambiguity. The second section unpacks the available body of empirical research to determine how the principal's role is changing as a result of school-improvement efforts. It draws on research from seven countries--Australia, Belgium, Canada, Great Britain, Israel, the United States, and New Zealand. These role changes are categorized as: leading from the center; enabling and supporting teacher success; managing reform; and extending the school community. Finally, the third section examines the dilemmas confronting educational leaders in their quest to restructure schooling. These dilemmas, or areas in which principals have considerable doubt, are described as the complexity dilemma, the search dilemma, the self dilemma, and the accountability dilemma. Contains 83 references. (LMI)

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Transformational Change and the Evolving Role of the Principal: Early Empirical Evidence

Joseph Murphy

> The traditional roles of principals and other educators in schools are changing and will continue to be reshaped, redefined and renegotiated as restructuring occurs. (Bredeson, 1991, p. 1)
>
> [A]lthough some of these reforms are highly controversial, they are being implemented, with major consequences for school management. (Bolam et al., 1992, p. 1)

As we noted in the Preface, the purpose of this volume is to enrich our understanding about the changing role of the principal in schools engaged in transformational reform efforts. We are particularly interested in insights emanating from interventions that have been ongoing for a number of years. At the same time, it is naive to believe that we begin our journey devoid of any understanding of the issue at hand--that is, of how principals are beginning to reshape their roles in response to such broad reform initiatives as school-based management, teaching for meaningful understanding, choice, and site-based decision making.

Our goal in this chapter is, therefore, to analyze the empirical evidence available to date concerning the evolving role of the principal. We structure that task in three ways. First, building on the material presented in Chapter 1, we briefly describe the effects of fundamental reform measures on the work

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environment of school principals. Next, we unpack the available body of empirical evidence to determine how the principal's role is changing as a result of major attempts at school improvement. Finally, since we are particularly concerned with the effects of reform on the principal, the third section of the chapter examines dilemmas confronting educational leaders in their quest to restructure schooling.

As noted, the primary focus is empirical studies. These are of two types: those that spotlight the role of the principal in restructuring efforts, and others in which the emphasis is elsewhere (e.g., on teachers) but which allow us to glean useful insights about principals as well. Because the restructuring movement is still relatively new (Murphy, 1993), nearly half of the studies examined have been presented at various conferences but have yet to find their way into print. This chapter also has a strong international flavor. To develop as comprehensive a portrait of the evolving role of the principal as possible, we draw on work from seven countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Great Britain, Israel, the United States, and New Zealand. Finally, while the findings are drawn exclusively from these empirical sources, our discussion of the data is enriched by references to some of the more thoughtful conceptual work in the area. Before we begin, however, a few words of caution are in order.

It is important to remember that we are studying transformational reform experiments, especially those associated

with the school restructuring movement. As far as we are able to determine, these improvement strategies occupy only a small section of the educational landscape. Discovering how principals in these schools act tells us little about how the average principal is behaving.

Second, the studies reported herein cover a wide terrain of reform strategies rather thinly rather than reviewing specific interventions in detail. Some of the studies deal with the changing role of the principal in schools that attempt to empower teachers, others focus on schools of choice, while others are most concerned with how school-based management and site-based decision making are reframing the principal's role. Although it is appropriate to cast such a wide net at the incipient stage of movement, the possibility that important differences among reform strategies may be masked should not be overlooked.

Third, the studies discussed in this chapter provide snapshots of the evolving role of the principalship early in the process of change. Given the recency of most of these interventions, this is less a critique than a statement of fact. What is of concern, however, is the possibility of drawing conclusions from findings that themselves may be evolving. In short, it is worth reminding ourselves that alterations in the role of the principal in later stages of significant reforms may vary from the picture captured at an earlier period of time and that "mid-stream" research provides us "with caveats aplenty regarding the long-term salience of issues or the means whereby

those issues may be resolved" (Smylie, Crowson, Hare, & Levin, 1993, p. 6).

Finally, it is important to recall that many new reform movements in education, specifically those positing a dramatic change in the role of the principal, gain strength by claiming a distinct break with the status quo. However, findings that appear to represent a sharp turn in the road to some analysts seem like extensions of existing pathways to others--especially to those using historical lenses (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Murphy, 1992a). Schools have a good deal of "organizational sediment" and "instructional guidance" (Cohen, 1989, pp. 6 and 8) that make any change, let alone radical change in basic roles, difficult indeed.

The Changing Work Environment

> The increased involvement of teachers and parents in decision-making, escalating pressures to *sell* the school, and the perceived threats to the program he had helped build . . . created a very different context for principal leadership than he was accustomed to: one in which he was clearly uncomfortable. (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993, p. 129)

Spurred on by the forces discussed in Chapter 1 and the resultant reform measures, principals seem to be working increasingly in a "turbulent policy environment [that] has important consequences for the organizational life of the school" (Vandenberghe, 1992, pp. 33 and 24; see also Goldring, 1992) and for the principalship. Three reform dynamics, in turn, appear to

be heightening this turbulence. To begin with, the educational system is becoming more complex. Expectations have risen and the number of players has expanded, "increas[ing] the scale and complexity of school management tasks" (Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington, & Weindling, 1992, p. 24) and adding "exponentially to the complexities and ambiguities of principaling" (Smylie et al., 1993, p. 10) "to the point where . . . some [principals are] in danger of sinking under pressure" (Earley, Baker, & Weindling, 1990, p. 10).

Concomitantly, the scale and the pace of change are overwhelming in many locations. In the United Kingdom, "recent years have seen change on an unprecedented scale" (Weindling, 1992, p. 65). "Too many and too fast" is how Earley and Baker (1989, p. 30) characterize the amount and pace of change there. Such "massive changes within a very short time-scale . . . means that most schools are suffering from 'innovation overload' or initiative fatigue" (Earley et al., 1990, p. 30). In New Zealand, schools have "faced an unparallelled set of innovations and reorganisation" (McConnell & Jeffries, 1991, p. 2); "the resultant process has been rushed and contradictory" (p. 2). In the United States, schools had no sooner begun to respond to a massive set of reform proposals based on the teacher and school effects research (Murphy, 1990a; 1990b) than they were bombarded with a plethora of new initiatives grounded in rediscovered conceptions of learning (see Cohen, 1988) and reframed views of leadership, organization, and governance (Murphy, 1990a; 1991).

The situation in Belgium is similar and has been nicely captured by one principal as follows: "Nowadays a principal has to write with a pencil, since what is written today by a pencil can be easily gummed tomorrow" (Vandenberghe, 1992, p. 26).

Finally, in conjunction with these other changes, there has been a growth in environmental uncertainty (Goldring, 1992), a state that produces increased levels of confusion and concern for principals (Prestine, 1991a; 1991b). McPherson and Crowson (1992) reveal that part of this uncertainty arises from the fact that, in many places, the organizational bureaucracy with its established routines is disintegrating. In some states and districts, therefore, restructuring has resulted in schools becoming free-floating entities with few clues about how to operate under new sets of rules. Uncertainty can also be traced to the contradictory and sometimes schizophrenic nature of recent reform initiatives (Boyd, 1990; Murphy, 1990a; 1991). It is not unusual, for example, to find central authorities clamoring vociferously for strong local control and governance while at the same time mandating system-wide curriculum and assessment strategies (Goldring, 1992; Vandenberghe, 1992; Weindling, 1992): "At best, principals receive mixed signals on what state policy makers want for them" (Education Commission of the States, 1990, p. 7).

As we discuss more fully in the next sections of this chapter, the jobs of administrators who are seriously attending to reform are becoming more difficult. While such job-enhancing

effects of transformational change as increased flexibility, enhanced autonomy, and shared responsibilities are noted, they pale in comparison to the doubts and worries expressed. A nearly universal concern is the expanded workload confronting principals in restructuring schools: "When heads [principals] were asked whether the role of middle managers was easier or more difficult, they had no hesitation in saying that it was more difficult" (Earley et al., 1990, p. 15); "[D]ata indicate that school reform has increased the principals' work load as well as expanded the repertoire of skills they need to function effectively" (Bennett, Bryk, Easton, Kerbow, Luppescu, & Sebring, 1992, p. 24). At the same time, "significant changes [are] expected [in] patterns of behavior for principals" (Bredeson, 1991, p. 19). The studies document that, while expectations are being added, little is being deleted from the principal's role (Bredeson, 1989; Ford, 1992). Within the context of the turbulent environment described above and "given the fact that the principal's role grows increasingly unclear as the sophistication of the position and the demands of society continue to increase" (Alexander, 1992, p. 13), this role overload is often accompanied by a good deal of role ambiguity (Prestine, 1991a; 1991b).

Role overload and role ambiguity--the fact that "the principalship is no longer a concrete role" (Alexander, 1992, p. 19)--often lead to increased stress for school administrators involved in fundamental change efforts. As we examine more fully in the last section of this chapter, these problems have also

been connected to a sense of loss for principals, a loss of control and a loss of professional identity (Bredeson, 1991).

The Changing Nature of the Role

> What has been the traditional role of the principal appears to be changing relative to the substantial changes and school-wide reforms that are beginning to take place in schools. (Christensen, 1992, p. 6)

The initial studies that examine the changing role of the principalship in restructuring schools provide support for the claim that "[p]rincipals have experienced more change under school reform than any other group" (Bradley, 1992, p. 19). Largely because new legislation and other externally generated expectations have altered the context of education, principals in most--but not all (see Lindle, 1992, for example)--restructuring schools believe that their roles have been altered in fundamental ways: "Regardless of whether the heads [principals] believed the job was easier or not, they certainly agreed it was different" (Earley et al., 1990, p. 10). In the remainder of this section, we group these role changes under the following four headings: leading from the center, enabling and supporting teacher success, managing reform, and extending the school community.

Leading from the Center

> The Principal now becomes relocated from the apex of the pyramid to the centre of the network of human relationships and functions as a change agent and resource. (Wilkinson, cited in Chapman, 1990, p. 227)

There is considerable evidence that principals who are taking the restructuring agenda seriously are struggling--often against long odds and often with only mixed success--to redefine their leadership role. For example, Earley and his colleagues (1990) report that, of the principals in their study, "[a]pproximately two thirds of the cohort believed they had become more consultative, more open and more democratic. Heads spoke of becoming increasingly aware of the need for more participative management and for staff ownership of change" (p. 9). Almost all the studies reviewed for this chapter conclude that the attempt to "recast power relationships" (Leithwood, Jantzi, Silins, & Dart, 1992, p. 30)--or to pass on much of the "considerable power and authority [that] have resided in the bureaucratic position of the school principal" (Chapman, 1990, p. 227) to teachers, parents, and occasionally students--is at the very core of this redefinition (Bredeson, 1991; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993).

Delegating leadership responsibilities. In a series of carefully crafted investigations, Leithwood (1992) and his colleagues (1990; 1991; 1992; this volume) expose the two tasks that form the foundation of these redesigned power relationships--"delegating authentic leadership responsibilities" (Leithwood et al., 1992, p. 22) and developing "collaborative decision-making processes in the school" (p. 30). On the first issue, delegation of authority, initial studies convey both the importance and the difficulty of sharing power. First, they

affirm that empowering others represents the biggest change (Prestine, 1991a) and poses "the greatest difficulties and problems for principals" (Prestine, 1991b, p. 15). As one Accelerated Schools principal nicely puts it, "[i]t's easy to set up a process, to delegate, but giving up control is hard" (Christensen, 1992, p. 24). At the same time, the studies impart a sense of how hard it can be for the organization and the community to permit the principal to let go. Existing routines, norms, and expectations are often solidly entrenched, while attempts to delegate control are often quite fragile indeed (Prestine, 1991a). These studies also underscore the centrality of a trusting relationship between principal and teachers in making genuine delegation a possibility (Chapman, 1990), a fact most directly noted by Smylie in his studies of transformational change efforts in the Midwest:

> The findings of this study suggest that teachers' willingness to participate in school decision making is influenced primarily by their relationships with their principals. . . . Teachers appear substantially more willing to participate in all areas of decision making if they perceive their relationships with their principals as more open, collaborative, facilitative, and supportive. They are much less willing to participate in any area of decision making if they characterize their relationships with principals as closed, exclusionary, and controlling.

(Smylie, 1992, p. 63; see also Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992)

Furthermore, these studies reveal that principals in transformational reform efforts can be successful only by learning to delegate:

> Data indicated that the overwhelming change perceived as necessary in the principal's role was the ability to empower teachers by sharing authority and decision making. From the teachers' perspective, the sharing of decision making authority was seen as essential to the process of restructuring; indeed, had to be accomplished before any other substantial restructuring could occur. (Prestine, 1991a, pp. 11-12; see also Bredeson, 1991).

Finally, these initial empirical investigations on the evolving role of school leaders indicate that, even given the great difficulties involved, principals "have at their disposal activities which are reasonably effective" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, p. 22) in "giv[ing] up hierarchical control" (Glickman, Allen, & Lunsford, 1992, p. 17) and empowering teachers to lead (Christensen, 1992; Goldman, Dunlap & Conley, 1991; Short & Greer, 1993; Smith, 1993). We examine some of these activities at the conclusion of this section as well as in the section on "enabling and supporting teacher success."

Developing collaborative decision making processes. Laced throughout these cases are descriptions of attempts both to establish alternatives to "traditional decision making

structures" (Conley, 1991, p. 39) and to forge a role for the principal consistent with the recast authority relationships that define these structures. Certainly the most prevalent change concerning the first issue--alternative structures--is the principal's role in the development of a variety of formal models of site-based decision making:

> One of the most interesting findings was that patterns of team or collegial management, operationalised in the form of a SMT, seem to be emerging and, in some cases, to be well established in the primary schools in the sample. This appears to indicate a significant shift from the position of, say, ten years ago. (Bolam et al., 1992, p. 23)

In addition, to foster the development of what Leithwood (1992) refers to as a "collaborative professional school culture" (p. 9), principals in some of these schools are taking a stronger role "encourag[ing] the formation and functioning of numerous informal groups" (Conley, 1991, p. 40).

Bringing shared authority to life. There is also a thick line of analysis in these reports about the extent to which principals give meaning to these emerging shared decision making models through their words, actions, and interpersonal relationships. As Chapman (1990) has discovered in her work on school-based management in Australia:

> [d]espite the provision of structures to enhance teacher involvement in decision-making and management, the evidence reveals that the influence of the principal remains

> fundamentally important in determining the extent, nature and pattern of teacher participation in the decision making of schools. (p. 223)

What seems to be a particularly important change for principals in this area is their willingness and "ability to work in collaborative, cooperative group decision making processes" (Prestine, 1991a, p. 23), to orchestrate from the background, to become: a support element or facilitator; an equal participant in shared decision making; and "one of many creative, caring, collaborative individuals in the school" (Christensen, 1992, p. 18):

> The primacy and importance of this role of democratic participation can not be underestimated. Data showed that while principal participation was a necessary factor in promoting importance of the effort and positively affecting the interest and activity level of the teacher participants, this participation had to be as an equal. (Prestine, 1991a, p. 14)

Empirical work on the role of principals in restructuring schools also provides some clues about how principals can "become less prominent and play primarily a supporting role" (Shields & Newton, 1992, p. 15). They can: reduce micro-management (Christensen, 1992); participate in team meetings as a member--not as chair (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Dart, 1991); "'step . . . back,' keep . . . their mouth shut,' 'get . . . things started and then let . . . go'" (Goldman et al., 1991, p. 15); "encourage

participation, acknowledge individual contributions and ensure effective implementation of Committee decisions" (Chapman, 1990, p. 223); and "model [themselves] the kinds of behaviors that lead to increased collaboration" (Conley, 1991, p. 42). In short, principals "have to be ready to let go and keep on letting go, so that others know that they are really in charge" (Goldman et al., 1991, p. 12).

Before we leave the role change of "leading from the center," two notes are in order. First, of the four types of role changes discussed in this chapter, this one appears to be the most difficult for principals. This change requires the development of new skills for many principals, especially group problem-solving skills (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993) and "specialized group facilitative skills" (Prestine, 1991a, p. 14). Implications for pre- and post-employment training abound--implications which are only slowly being recognized (Murphy, 1992b; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992).

Second, although there is evidence that recasting power relationships enhances teacher involvement in schools, helps teachers take on new responsibilities and roles, and strengthens relationships among staff, the effects of this change are not always positive (Sackney & Dibski, 1992; Weiss, 1993; Weiss, Cambone, & Wyeth, 1992). Of particular concern is the lack of linkage between teacher empowerment/school-based decision making and student learning (Murphy, 1991; Murphy, Evertson, & Radnofsky, 1991; Taylor & Bogotch, 1992):

> [T]here is little or no evidence that [site-based management] has any direct or predictable relationship to changes in instruction and students' learning. In fact, the evidence suggests that the implementation of site-based management reforms has a more or less random relationship to changes in curriculum, teaching, and students' learning. (Elmore, 1993, p. 40)

What is becoming increasingly apparent is that the process dimensions of leading from the center need to be united with insights about learning and teaching if this evolving role for principals is to lead to important benefits for students.

Enabling and Supporting Teacher Success

> Principals in 2020 schools are serving as facilitators and developers, rather than bosses. They are involved in helping to create a common vision of the school, to model behaviors consistent with that vision, and to allocate resources and distribute information that helps the total school community move toward that vision. (Conley, 1991, p. 38)

Enabling and supporting teacher success encompasses a variety of functions that we discuss below, such as promoting the development of a school vision and providing resources to staff. Building on the above analysis about leading from the center, what appears to be as critical as the tasks themselves are the bases for the activities and the ways in which they are performed. To the extent that there is an emerging empirical

picture of principal leadership in restructuring schools, it seems to be one that is grounded not so much on line authority as it is "based on mutual respect and equality of contribution and commitment" (Prestine, 1991a, p. 27). It reflects a "general style of management" (Bolam et al., 1992, p. 11) that is democratic, participative, and "consultative" (p. 19). "Group-centered leadership behaviors" (Bredeson, 1991, p. 19) are often crucial. The role of "behind-the-scenes facilitator" (Louis & King, 1993, p. 234) is often paramount.

In enabling and supporting teacher success, principals in schools engaged in fundamental reform endeavors often perform five functions: (1) helping formulate a shared vision; (2) "cultivating a network of relationships" (Prestine, 1991b, p. 16); (3) allocating resources consistent with the vision; (4) providing information to staff; and (5) promoting teacher development. Common to all of these functions are efforts of principals to support and affirm teachers' leadership (Clift, Johnson, Holland, & Veal, 1992; Goldman et al., 1991) and to "provide the scaffold for teachers to enhance their own understanding and professional awareness" (Prestine, 1991a, p. 25)--that is, to support teacher role change (Smith, 1993).

Helping formulate a shared vision. As with the effective schools improvement model (Murphy, Hallinger, & Mesa, 1985), helping to formulate a vision appears as a critical function of principals working to facilitate significant change at their schools. A key difference in restructuring schools is that the

principal is neither the sole nor the primary determiner of the vision (Hallinger, 1992; Murphy, 1992a). Consistent with the discussion above, the role of the principal in restructuring schools is one of "helping to formulate a shared vision of the school" (Wallace & Wildy, 1993, p. 14). As Goldman and his colleagues (1991) note, the essence of this change lies in the fact that, while the principal remains a "valued participant," "vision is embodied by the process rather than by individuals" (p. 9). In this task area, principals in restructuring schools are often helpful in keeping their colleagues from narrowing their vision, or, examined from another angle, in assisting the school to maintain "a broader perspective" (Conley, 1991, p. 39) on ways in which it can reshape itself. Principals in the studies examined in this chapter are often cited for their ability and willingness to become "the keeper and promoter of the vision" (Christensen, 1992, p. 21). "The importance of [principals] modelling and reinforcing vision-related behaviors" (Goldman et al., 1991, p. 23) appears critical to the success of reform endeavors (Leithwood, 1992).

Cultivating a network of relationships. In a like manner, "the role of the principal in cultivating a network of relationships . . . [is] of importance not only in developing collaborative, participatory decision making but in maintaining the restructuring effort as a whole" (Prestine, 1991b, p. 16). As Prestine (1991b) goes on to report, the principal is "a key player in developing this web of relationships that allow

restructuring schools to weather the inevitable storms they will face" (p. 16). Principals in restructuring schools are often adept at creating what Goldman and his colleagues (1991) refer to as "synergistic groups" (p. 12): "They select and develop groups of people who can work effectively, and then empower them by giving them meaningful assignments. Further, they work continually to help other staff participate" (p. 12). Specifically, they create internal support structures (Vandenberghe, 1992) such as joint planning and working arrangements that "reduce teachers' isolation" (Leithwood, 1992, p. 10). As noted earlier, they also nurture the development of rich informal networks of relationships (Conley, 1991; Pavan & Entrekin, 1991).

Allocating resources consistent with the vision. The scholarship on recent transformational change in schools also highlights the role of the principal in providing needed resources (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). Specifically, in successful restructuring projects, "[t]he principalship is viewed as the primary role for obtaining and maintaining those conditions and factors which allow the change/restructuring process to proceed" (Prestine, 1991a, p. 14). While in some cases, principals are active in securing additional resources, "[m]ore often, the primary help from the principal [is] in assisting the staff in utilizing already existing resources" (Goldman et al., 1991, p. 11). What appears central to both these sets of tasks--securing new resources and distributing

existing ones--is the ability of the principal to use the school vision to inform his or her activities (Conley, 1993). Finally, these leaders allocate personal resources, especially their own time, in ways that demonstrate commitment to the restructuring agenda of the school (Leithwood et al., 1991).

Providing information. One finding evident in these studies is the connection between access to knowledge and successful teacher empowerment (Kirby & Colbert, 1992). A second is that, if this linkage is to occur, principals "will have to serve as information and knowledge resources for their staffs" (Prestine, 1991a, p. 24). The studies consistently portray how "principals actively facilitate sound teacher decision making by helping teachers obtain the information they need now" (Goldman et al., 1991, p. 13). They also confirm that, for many principals, this is not an easy task. The information they provide often falls into one of four categories: "knowledge of and expertise in the restructuring efforts" (Prestine, 1991a, p. 15); technical knowledge about how the school and school system operate in the areas of personnel, budget, and so forth--what Conley (1991) refers to as "information about how to function in a bureaucracy" (p. 41); insights from the larger world of education outside the school (Leithwood et al., 1991); and knowledge about how all the pieces of the reform fit together (Prestine, 1991a).

Promoting teacher development. Supporting the "development of new skills and abilities among teachers" (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993, p. 132) and between teachers and the principal (Smylie &

Brownlee-Conyers, 1992) is the final way that principals were found to enable teacher success in these restructuring schools (Goldring, 1992; Mitman & Lambert, in press). A number of strategies for "support[ing] the professional and personal growth of teachers" (Goldman et al., 1991, p. 13) have already been presented: cultivating teacher leadership; providing opportunities for teachers to work together on meaningful tasks; helping teachers navigate the bureaucratic shoals of schools; and sharing information openly. Others uncovered in these investigations include: encouraging "teachers to observe one another, visit other schools, and sign up for workshops" (Mitman & Lambert, in press); "assisting teachers in their own classrooms [and] attending in-service activities with staff" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, p. 26); modeling risk taking (Prestine, 1991a, 1991b); and providing recognition (Goldman et al., 1991; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990).

Managing Reform

> [T]he management of the school-site acquires added importance--for there is so much more now to be managed: a modest budget, an improvement plan, a school-community relationship, a school-site cut off from its do-it-our-way bureaucracy, a student body with critical learning needs, students and parents (and communities) requiring a brokerage of added services and resources. (McPherson & Crowson, 1992, p. 20)

An enhanced management role. Many principals in restructuring schools are reportedly devoting more time to the management aspects of their jobs. For example, in a study in Great Britain, Earley and his colleagues (1990) report that 40 percent of their principals believed that they were taking on "a more administrative role" (p. 7). Similar findings have been noted by McConnell and Jeffries (1991) in New Zealand, and by McPherson and Crowson (1992) and Bennett and his colleagues (1992) in the United States. In fact, this latter group of researchers report that the increase for Chicago principals in the area of management responsibilities is higher than for any other job responsibility: "More than half of the principals hired prior to reform report that they are now spending more time on school management" (p. 23). In some ways, this represents an augmentation of existing responsibilities (e.g., additional budgeting tasks). In others, it illustrates the undertaking of new tasks (e.g., working with school-site governing boards). In either case, the cause is clear: reform means that there is simply more to do at the school level than was the case previously.

A diminished instructional role. Interestingly, this heightened responsibility to manage reform often comes at the expense of the principal's educational/instructional role. For example, in New Zealand:

> Principals who formerly had time for direct classroom support of teachers and their students, and were involved in

> demonstration teaching, special programmes or coaching now found the demands of restructuring had shifted the emphases of their actions, time and commitment. They felt that a management emphasis had taken over from instructional leadership. (McConnell & Jeffries, 1991, p. 24)

In Great Britain, Early and Baker (1989) report similar results. And in Chicago, three studies reach a similar conclusion (Bennett et al., 1992; Ford, 1992; McPherson & Crowson, 1992):

> In general, principals sense that they are now spending more time than they should on local school management and central and district office functions. Administrative aspects of their job divert effort away from those concerns that principals believe deserve more attention--their own professional development and instructional leadership. (Bennett et al., 1992, p. 24)

It is often unclear from these studies how principals--and researchers--define management functions vis-a-vis educational ones. It is also possible that, taking a clue from earlier work on leadership in effective schools, principals in restructuring schools will need to learn how to employ management functions in the service of educational goals (see Dwyer, 1984; McEvoy, 1987; Murphy, 1988; 1990c). Nonetheless, given the linkage between principal instructional leadership and school performance (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, 1990c), the role redefinition uncovered in these studies is a cause for concern.

Extending the School Community

> Increased school management . . . dramatically alters the nature of the principal's professional life. Principals are forced to assume a more public role, interacting with people in the wider community, forging links with the school and its environment. (Chapman, 1990, p. 229)

A formidable body of evidence shows that the boundary-spanning function of the principal is enhanced as a result of school restructuring efforts, especially those that underscore the importance of parental voice and/or choice (Earley & Baker, 1989; Goldring, 1992; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). Reports from nearly all sectors of the restructuring movement confirm that: (1) "the boundaries between schools and their external environments [are] becom[ing] more permeable" (Goldring & Rallis, 1992, p. 3)--there is a "complicated blending of school and community" (McPherson & Crowson, 1992, p. 25); (2) "environmental leadership" (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993, p. 137) or "boundary management" (Earley et al., 1990, p. 8) is becoming more important--"principals must become more attuned to external school environments" (Goldring, 1992, p. 54); and (3) principals "are spending more time with parents and community residents than before reform" (McPherson & Crowson, 1992, p. 19)--

> The most dramatic shifts are reported in the area of school ties. Sixty percent of the principals [in Chicago] currently report moderate to extensive activity in this

area--twice as much as prior to reform. In addition, fewer than one fifth of the schools remain in the minimal category. (Bennett et al., 1992, p. 18)

Promoting the school. Perhaps the most dramatic shift for the principals in schools engaged in significant reform efforts has been their need to expand public relations activities with external constituents. Because principals realize that restructuring places them "more than ever . . . in a market setting" (McPherson & Crowson, 1992, p. 10; see also Murphy, 1993) and "because only those schools able to adapt sufficiently to their new environments will flourish" (Goldring & Rallis, 1992, p. 11; see also Guthrie, 1992) in this new context, the entrepreneurial role of the principal is being enhanced (Goldring, 1992; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). In some restructuring schools "there is a completely new emphasis (and pressure) for principals to obtain and retain students" (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993, p. 127) and a renewed interest on "the importance of client perceptions of schools" (Davies, Ellison, Thompson, & Vann, 1993, p. 2). In short, because "the public image of schools has become increasingly a matter of attention by heads" (Earley et al., 1990, p. 13), more and more of the principals' time in restructuring schools is being directed toward "public relations and the promotion of the school's image" (p. 8) and toward selling and marketing the school and its programs to the community (Goldring, 1992; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993).

Working with the governing board. More specifically, these investigations portray a picture of principals who are "involved in a massive increase" (Earley et al., 1990, p. 7) in work with governing boards (Ford, 1991; McConnell & Jeffries, 1991)--parent and teacher boards that in many cases came into existence as part of the restructuring agenda. While Hallinger and Hausman (1993) maintain that such "direct participation of parents [has] made parental beliefs, values, and perceptions more central in the lives of professional educators" (p. 138), it also represents opportunity costs for principals. As one school administrator in Chicago remarked: it "is another full-time job educating the council" (Ford, 1991, p. 11). This education includes: keeping the board "abreast of its duties" (Ford, 1992, p. 14); informing board members about school activities; providing resources; maintaining ongoing communication; consulting with them before important decisions are made; and fostering a sense of cohesion among board members (Ford, 1991; 1992; Hess & Easton, 1991; McConnell & Jeffries, 1991).

Connecting with parents. While less pervasive than the two earlier themes--promoting the school and working with its governing board--there are hints that principals in restructuring schools extend the school community by working more directly with all parents and justifying school processes and outcomes. For example, in addressing the issue of parent contact in their studies in Great Britain, Earley and Baker (1989) report:

> [P]arents also figured significantly in heads' comments. They were now taking more of the heads' time. One reason was that parents had been made more aware of their rights. Many heads felt that parents were entitled to an explanation and even a justification of the decisions that the head and the school had taken. (p. 31)

Similar findings have been reported by Weindling (1992), McPherson and Crowson (1992), Zeldin (1990), and Hallinger and Hausman (1993), who conclude that "the choice component of the restructuring plan has meant many more hours interacting with parents individually and in groups" (p. 130). There are indications that principals in these case reports are acting as if accountability expectations have been increased (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993; Vandenberghe, 1992). As Vandenberghe (1992) notes, there is some felt need to address these expectations: "In general, we see that the more deregulation from the top, the more responsibility for the principal and as a result, the more justification is expected" (p. 26).

At the same time, data emphasizing the "growing importance . . . of interagency collaboration" (Education Commission of the States, 1990, p. vi) and the role of the principal in developing service delivery networks were in short supply. It would appear that there is a gap in this area between the prescriptive literature--in which this role receives a good deal of attention--and what is actually occurring in many early reform endeavors.

The Dilemmas of Role Change

> Changing roles for administrators will have all the insecurity that typically accompanies newly found freedoms. (Guthrie, 1990, p. 227)
>
> The principals in our sample had many more negative comments concerning how their role has changed. (Ford, 1991, p. 10)

In the last section, we examined trends in the way roles of school leaders are being reshaped by a variety of fundamental reform efforts. Here the emphasis is on the dynamics of that change, particularly the concerns of principals as they struggle to redefine their jobs. We analyze these issues under the following four headings: the complexity dilemma; the search dilemma; the dilemma of self; and the accountability dilemma. The theme that runs throughout these areas has been nicely phrased by Bennett and his colleagues (1992): considerable "doubt remains about the role they [principals] are being asked to fill" (p. 27).

The Complexity Dilemma

Overwhelming workload. Central to the stories chronicled by the investigators cited so far is the understanding that principals are generally overwhelmed by the expectations that reform has brought: "principals' jobs have become much more difficult" (Bradley, 1991, p. 16). Principals generally believe that fundamental changes such as school choice and site-based decision making will "greatly increase their workload" (Weindling, 1992, p. 74), a belief that is being confirmed by

their colleagues engaged with significant reform initiatives throughout the world (Ford, 1991; McConnell & Jeffries, 1991). Bennett et al. (1992) report that "[p]rincipals feel overwhelmed by administrative demands. Almost three-quarters of the principals hired prior to reform strongly argue that administrative demands have increased since reform" (p. 25). Not only have expectations expanded but, as noted earlier, the job has become increasingly complex (Caldwell, 1992) and the work environment increasingly turbulent: "Heads used to steer a course: now we simply try to keep our raft afloat as we are carried through the rapids" (anonymous principal cited in Weindling, 1992, p. 75). A particular "concern . . . is that educators may be fighting a losing battle by attempting to take on the ills of society in isolation" (Alexander, 1992, p. 22), that a never-ending array of new reform initiatives may sink the educational enterprise--and drown principals in the process.

Difficult working conditions. Principals in schools involved in major reforms are anxious not only about the workload but also about conditions of work that often make their tasks impossible. "The most common complaint [is] about time" (Hess & Easton, 1991, p. 11), or, more precisely, about the "time consuming" (Rungeling & Glover, 1991, p. 418) nature of systemic change or "the lack of time to do all that is required of them" (Bradley, 1992, p. 19). The "additional time and effort" (Mitman & Lambert, in press) required to implement reform is not the only lament, however. Principals are worried about the time needed

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for their own role adjustments and the opportunity costs associated with spending time on managing reform initiatives rather than on leadership activities (Bredeson, 1991; Hess & Easton, 1991).

A shortage of trust and an absence of needed financial resources are other work conditions that increase the complexity of the principal's role. While empirically we know that high levels of trust at the district and building levels facilitate restructuring (Kirby & Colbert, 1992; Short & Greer, 1993; Smylie, 1992) and permit "principals to more easily relinquish control, delegate responsibilities, take risks, share frustrations and rethink their leadership roles without feeling threatened in terms of job security or their self-identity as principals" (Bredeson, 1991, p. 10), there is often a noticeable lack of trust across levels in districts engaged in restructuring efforts (Christensen, 1992; Earley & Baker, 1989; Prestine, 1991a). In addition, "[l]ack of adequate funding" (Ford, 1992, p. 12), or "insufficient resources" (Bennett et al., 1992, p. 26), greatly hamper attempts by principals to forge new roles within the context of fundamental reform.

Conflicting expectations. Compounding the problems from the principals' perspective is the belief that they "face multiple expectations which often seem at odds" (Education Commission of the States, 1990, p. 10). They are dismayed by what they view as "conflicting policy directives" (Zeldin, 1990, p. 20) and inconsistent management messages from the district office (Ford,

1991), especially signals to emphasize a bottom-up management strategy while "the central office itself maintains a traditional top-down decision making model" (Alexander, 1992, p. 21). At the same time, the fact that "school reform has created considerable role conflict for principals" (Bennett et al., 1992, p. 26) leads to "a high degree of anxiety and uncertainty about their evolving role in the change process" (Alexander, 1992, p. 14):

> [T]hey are being asked not only to implement an unclearly defined innovation, but also to assume new professional roles for which there is no clear definition. . . . They believe they are . . . caught in change, trying to cope, perform, and lead the transformation of their schools without a clear understanding of their ultimate role in the newly emerging process. (pp. 14 and 16)

They often see themselves "caught between district level and school level change" (Rowley, 1992, p. 27) or "as the middle person between all the players in the change process and who perhaps must deal with too many factors to bring about the necessary changes" (Alexander, 1992, p. 15)--a situation often "inducing disenchantment and further fragmentation of the meaning and process of restructuring" (Rowley, 1992, p. 34).

The Search Dilemma

> Educators are not accustomed to working this way, and it can be frightening to leap into the unknown with no maps to follow and few reliable guides. (Clift et al., 1992, p. 906)

An absence of road maps. The ability of principals in restructuring districts to envision and assume new roles is often hindered by a lack of clarity about the nature of transformational change and about the process of undertaking such a journey. Two conditions lie at the heart of this dilemma. First, restructuring itself is an amorphous concept (Guthrie, 1992; Mitchell & Beach, 1993; Tyack, 1990). It is not surprising, then, that an absence of clarity can characterize specific interventions within schools and school districts. For example, Alexander (1992) reports that in his study:

> an overwhelming majority of the principals responded either that they had no clear understanding of the central office's definition of site-based management or that they were not sure what the central office meant by site-based management. (p. 7)

Second, studies reveal that principals have difficulty envisioning alternative futures that look different from the status quo. As we have reported elsewhere (Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1992), the principals with whom we have worked demonstrate a "rather consistent inability or reluctance to let go of past experiences as a basis for their projections. . . . Their responses reflected assumptions of schooling as we know it, rather than what might potentially occur in a restructured school" (p. 344). These two conditions--an unclear picture of the future and an inability to disengage from current practice--often made the search for a new role for principals in these

studies precarious at best. And even when new visions of schooling are imported, principals often experience difficulty "getting their heads around" (Smylie et al., 1993, p. 11) what these alternatives mean.

Inadequate development opportunities. Thus many of the studies examined herein suggest that "even professionals who view themselves as supporters of fundamental reform may be severely limited by their own experience, training and beliefs in bringing about a new order of schools" (Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1992, p. 348). Exacerbating this problem is the fact that principals are being asked to reconceptualize radically their roles, while few resources are provided to help them (Conley, 1993). In many locations restructuring plans have not "foster[ed] the learning of the new attitudes and roles that [are] fundamental to the new style of decision-making and management" (Chapman, 1990, p. 240) required of principals in restructuring schools. Therefore, principals both readily acknowledge that they do not possess the skills necessary to carry out their new responsibilities (Weindling, 1992), and agree that "there has been inadequate in-service and training to prepare principals for the role they are expected to play" (Alexander, 1992, p. 18).

The Dilemma of Self

> This new way of doing business can be fraught with difficulty for many principals. . . . Essentially, these

people are being asked to modify their personalities. (Conley, 1993, p. 83)

The process of abandonment. Given the discussion so far, it should come as little surprise that principals in restructuring schools are struggling "to gain a sense of their own emerging roles" (Alexander, 1992, p. 17; see also Smith, 1993). There is reason to believe that, at least during the formative stages of reform, principals are more concerned with how innovations will "affect them and their role as principal" than they are "with the actual mechanics of the implementation" (Alexander, 1992, p. 13). While principals' concerns in this area are multi-faceted, most are evident in the dilemma of "letting go," or empowering others while maintaining a leadership presence (Prestine, 1991b). Macpherson (1989) describes the process as follows:

> In essence, it means that individual members [principals] have to set aside dynamic conservatism, allow part of their professional self to die and be bereaved, as it were, and then negotiate a new and dimly perceived future in the emerging organization. (p. 42)

According to Bredeson (1991):

> relinquishing of one social role script for another results in a variety of affective and cognitive responses by individuals and can be likened to the normal loss process in which one needs first to recognize the dysfunctionalities of a current role, to let go of those role elements which impede change to new roles to meet new realities, and

finally, to negotiate new and more satisfying roles to replace old ones. (p. 6)

This process of abandonment is not without costs. Chicago, for example, saw one in six principals retire early when district-wide reform measures were implemented there in 1988 (Bradley, 1992). A more recent study finds that "[o]nly 41 percent of those remaining principals feel "better about working in schools since reform" (Bennett et al., 1992, p. 3). Similar laments can be found throughout the pages of the empirical work completed to date on the role of the principal in transformational reform efforts.

The core dimension of "letting go" for principals is learning how to relinquish direct control and how to orchestrate from the sidelines (Murphy, 1992a; 1992b). Because principals often bear responsibility for the outcomes of the decision-making process, and therefore believe that they need to be in charge, letting go is often the most troublesome barrier for principals (Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1992; Prestine, 1991; Sackney & Dibski, 1992): "for the elementary principals [in our study], sharing responsibility with teachers was easier to advocate than to accomplish" (Clift et al., 1992, p. 895).

Grappling with the educator role. Thus "the fear of . . . the loss of their . . . not inconsiderable autonomy cause[s] disquiet to many" (Chapman, 1990, p. 224) principals. So, too, for some principals, does the potential loss of their educational leadership role under the onslaught of "administrative demands"

(Bennett et al., 1992, p. 26). As we discussed previously, in many schools engaged in significant change there is a movement in the principalship away from notions such as head teacher, instructional leader, and "leading professional (educator)" (Weindling, 1992, p. 75) toward a more administratively-grounded view of the role (Earley & Baker, 1989; Ford, 1991)--a trend often reinforced by newly empowered teachers in restructuring schools (Prestine 1991a; 1991b). The extra demands of managing fundamental reform often leave principals with "far less time available for professional" (McConnell & Jeffries, 1991, p. 6) and "supervisory tasks" (Ford, 1991, p. 4):

> Principals [in Chicago] indicate that they are working on average almost sixty hours per week, yet they feel that their most critical concern--leadership for instructional improvement . . . is being displaced by managerial issues. The time demands of such activities appear to limit the effort principals can devote to school improvement. (Bennett et al., 1992, p. 24)

This loss is particularly disquieting for principals who have heeded calls over the last fifteen years for enhanced instructional leadership on their part (Murphy, 1990c).

The Accountability Dilemma

> An administrator in one of our schools highlighted a key dilemma. He said that the participatory body can make the decisions, but if the decisions do not work, they are not the ones held accountable; when the central office

> evaluates, it is "the principal's butt that's in a sling." Officially and legally, the principal is accountable. (Weiss, Cambone, & Wyeth, 1992, p. 364)

Perhaps the most "fundamental concern awaiting resolution in the minds of school principals" (Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1992, p. 348) trying to reinvent their leadership roles is the issue of accountability, specifically the dilemma of having the "ultimate responsibility lying with the principal" (Hess & Easton, 1991, p. 13) while others are empowered to make the decisions:

> The principals verbalized that they have been charged with bringing about an organizational transformation in their schools by empowering others to decide how this will be done. Yet these same principals also reported that, in their view, the responsibility for the success or failure of these decisions has not been shared. (Alexander, 1992, p. 14)

In other words, "[m]any may worry about ending up in the position of a manager of a baseball team that is losing; in most cases, the manager goes and the players stay" (Conley, 1993, p. 83). This concern is amplified by widely-reported demands for enhanced accountability at the local level (Shields & Newton, 1992; Smylie et al., 1993; Vandenberghe, 1992). There is among the principals in these studies, in addition to extensive concern over this issue, a widespread belief "that if parents and teachers are given the authority to make decisions, they must also be

accountable for the results" (Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1992, p. 347).

Conclusion

In these introductory chapters, we have attempted to set the stage for the studies that follow in Chapters 3 through 12. We examined what we believe are the major challenges and possibilities confronting principals as we move toward the 21st century. We also provided a sketch of the changing role of principals in schools actually engaged in fundamental reforms. We turn now to the heart of the volume--longitudinal studies on how the principalship is reframed in restructuring schools. We shall return to the issues in this section in the concluding chapter.

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